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SUBJ: ACOTA VIP DAY A SUCCESS

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¶1. (U) Officials from the Malawi Defense Force (MDF), the Ministry of Defense, Parliament, and local media attended a VIP day at the African Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA) training on February 15. The ACOTA training runs from February 6 - 24, and is training over 950 MDF soldiers in various aspects of peacekeeping.

¶2. (SBU) Ten parliamentarians from the Security and Defense Committee, including the committee Chairman, made the hour and a half hour trip to Salima for the training overview. One of the five companies that VIPs observed in the ACOTA training is scheduled to cycle into the peace-keeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo next month, replacing a Malawian company currently there.

¶3. (SBU) Malawian officials expressed gratitude for the opportunity to visit the training, and some parliamentarians noted that it was their first time to an army facility outside the capital city. The ACOTA training wraps up on February 24 with a battalion-wide evacuation exercise.

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